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September 1, 1961
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TO : THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE, WASHINGTON

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REPORTER

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ACTION ASSIGNED TO: Mr. Hallam	ACTION TAKEN: Noted	
NAME OF OFFICER & OFFICE SYMBOL: E Paige CS	DATE OF ACTION: 9/15/61	DIRECTIONS TO RM/R: [illegible]

EXTERNAL - POLITICAL (LIMITED OFFICIAL USE)

1. Berlin Crisis. There was a steady build-up of measures designed to demonstrate that the USSR has a strong negotiating position for any talks that may take place with the Western powers on Germany-Berlin. While Soviet propaganda sought to convey the impression that the increasingly lowering atmosphere of international crisis and war danger was fabricated by the West, and particularly by the FRG and "imperialistic circles" in the US, the Soviet Union was blatantly engaged in upping the ante.

Early in the week, the press started to carry a series of letters from factory workers, party officials, and military personnel, and reports of factory meetings volunteering support of the Soviet regime on its Berlin policy. As if in response to this "public demand." for the strengthening of the "defense of the homeland," an announcement in the name of the Party and Government was published on August 30 that troops and noncoms who normally would be scheduled for transfer to the reserves this year would be retained pending the signature of a German peace treaty. On August 31, the decision to resume testing of nuclear weapons was announced.

Although there has been little evidence up to now that the Soviet public is alarmed about the danger of war, it would seem that the cumulative impact of steps taken by the Soviet regime is bound to have this effect. The timing of this build-up seems clearly designed to counter and off-set recent US decisions, as well as to improve the Soviet bargaining position in eventual negotiations. (End LIMITED OFFICIAL USE)

2. NUCLEAR TESTS. (Begin CONFIDENTIAL). On August 31, the Soviet Government announced that it would resume experimental nuclear tests. It appeared from the announcement that the basic reason for the decision was the need felt by the Soviet military to test new types of thermonuclear weapons. The overt reason given for the decision was that it was necessary to strengthen the security of the USSR in the light of alleged threats by the US and its allies to unleash war if a separate peace treaty were concluded by the USSR with the German Democratic Republic. The timing of the announcement, on the very eve of the Non-Aligned Countries Conference and only a week before Nehru's date of arrival in Moscow (September 6) underscores the urgency which the Soviets apparently attach to the question of resumption.

The following factors may have played a role in the timing of the announcement:

(1) The announcement was designed to reinforce the campaign of terror undertaken by Khrushchev at the end of July and to make more credible to the outside world, as well as to the Soviet people, the Government's determination to push the Berlin issue through to a decision.

(2) Technical requirements may have argued for early tests.

(3) The Soviet leadership may have felt that resumption of testing would not entail a significantly greater propaganda loss than would unilateral disruption of the Geneva nuclear test conference where the Soviet

position had become particularly embarrassing following the introduction of new Anglo-American proposals.

(4) While conscious of the adverse impact the announcement would have on neutrals, the Soviets may calculate that resumption of testing would cause the non-aligned states, meeting in Belgrade, to generate greater pressure on the West for negotiations on Berlin and general and complete disarmament. (END CONFIDENTIAL)

3. Non-Aligned Conference. (OFFICIAL USE ONLY) Preliminary TASS despatches from Belgrade suggest that the Soviets will appraise the conference on the basis of the opinions it expresses on: (1) the conclusion of a peace treaty with Germany and the "settlement on this basis" of the status of West Berlin; (2) implementation of the UN Declaration calling for the immediate granting of independence to colonial peoples and countries, and (3) negotiation of a treaty for general and complete disarmament.

4. Brazil. Events in Brazil flowing from the resignation of President Quadros were closely followed in the Soviet press. Commentaries on the situation generally alleged that basic responsibility for the resignation rested with Washington, which was said to have been particularly annoyed by President Quadros' attitude toward Cuba and policy of developing friendly relations with "socialist" countries. On the question of a successor, commentaries did not go beyond pointing out that the Brazilian constitution provides that, upon resignation of the incumbent, the post of President goes to the Vice President, namely, Goulart. That Goulart's assumption of the presidency would be welcomed by Moscow, was implicit from the notation in these reports that he had recently been in the USSR and Communist China.

5. CONGO. Soviet press despatches from the Congo covered the formation of the National Party of Lumumba, under the leadership of Gizenga, and the activities of the UN in both Katanga and Stanleyville. Reports on the UN operation in Katanga highlighted the arrest of European, and especially Belgian, officers of Tshombe's air force and gendarmerie. (End OFFICIAL USE ONLY)

6. LAOS. (LIMITED OFFICIAL USE) Of the major contemporary trouble spots in the world, Laos continued to receive the least attention in Soviet propaganda. Several TASS despatches were carried in the press alleging the renewal of military activity by the forces of Phoumi and Boun Oum and warning that a settlement could only be reached on the basis of a government headed by Souvanna Phouma. Nothing was said about the Geneva Conference on Laos or about Soviet diplomatic activity indicating Soviet interest in speeding up a Laotian settlement. (END LIMITED USE ONLY)

7. SUDAN. The Soviet Government announced on August 31 that the Chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, Leonid I. Brezhnev, would visit the Sudan for an official visit beginning November 14, 1961. The visit reciprocates one made to the Soviet Union in July of this year by President Abboud of the Sudan. (UNCLASSIFIED)

INTERNAL - POLITICAL (OFFICIAL USE ONLY)

8. Hoarding and the War Scare in the Soviet Union. On August 30, the Soviet press announced that the release of conscripts from the Soviet armed forces would be postponed and on August 31 it was announced that atomic testing would resume. These announcements probably will intensify the population's anxiety over the possibility of war.

Up to August 29, the populace had apparently remained fairly unresponsive to international developments and no panic purchasing was in evidence. Only one article had come to the Embassy's attention indicating official concern over the problem of hoarding (Sovetskaya Latvia, August 27, 1961).

Up to August 29, Embassy travellers, foreign diplomats, and tourists with whom Embassy officers had spoken, generally agreed that there were no clear indications of panic buying or hoarding in the provinces. Although some Soviet intellectuals seemed troubled over the prospect of war, the man-in-the-street was full of sloganized expressions of hope that there would be peace.

9. Wholesale "Renewal" of the Baku City Party Apparatus. On August 26, following the 36th Party Conference of the Baku City Party Committee, formation was announced of a new City Party Bureau, City Party Committee and City Party Auditing Commission (Bakinskiy Rabochiy, August 27, 1961). This is the first such organizational meeting in preparation for the XXII CPSU Congress, which has come to the Embassy's attention in a form that can be subjected to analysis and comparison with past records.

Comparison of these groups with the same organs elected 18 months earlier at the 35th Conference show a strikingly high turn-over. About 55% of the old members of the Party Committee (elected January, 1960) have been dropped from the rolls. Similarly, about 75% of the Party Committee candidate-members and 95% of the members of the Auditing Commission have been dropped. By contrast, although the City Party Committee's First Secretary was not reelected, either as First Secretary or to the Committee Bureau, (he was, however, reelected a member of the Committee), seven of the nine members of the bureau have been retained. The relative stability of membership of the Bureau may be an indication that, even at the lower levels, the apparatchiki will be more successful in hanging on to their positions, despite plans for "renewal," than the rank and file functionary (Despatch 187, September 1, 1961).

It will be remembered that the Draft Party Statute proposed for adoption at the coming XXII CPSU Congress calls for "renewal" of "not less than one-half of the composition of City Party Committees." Obviously, the Baku City Party Committee has overfulfilled its norm and the Auditing Commission, the organ which exercises the party control function, has been almost completely house-cleaned, perhaps to facilitate introduction of new policies with fresh personnel.

10. Rumored Suicide of Former CC Secretary, A. I. Kirichenko. According to a rumor now circulating in Moscow, A. I. Kirichenko committed suicide about two months ago. Several years ago, as a Presidium member, Kirichenko was closely identified with Khrushchev. At that time, he was one of the secretaries of the CC of the CPSU. His eclipse was foreshadowed on January 12, 1960, when he was appointed First Secretary of Rostov Oblast, a job from which he was subsequently dismissed five months later, on June 15, following loss of his Presidium position (May 4, 1960).

Kirichenko's suicide is said to have resulted from a quarrel with Khrushchev. The dispute is said to have originated with a complaint registered against Kirichenko by the director of an important Rostov agricultural-implement factory to the effect that Kirichenko was interfering in the affairs of that enterprise. Khrushchev supposedly warned Kirichenko that he would have to stop his meddling or be reduced to the status of a kolkhoz brigadier. Worry over his future is said to have driven Kirichenko to suicide (Airgram A-162).

11. Communism and Private Property. Izvestiya of August 29 carried an article commenting on Communism's impact on private possessions. Written by Academician S. G. Strumilin, a member of the USSR Academy of Science's Department of Economics, Philosophy and Legal Sciences, the article takes the form of answers to workers' questions. It seems designed to reassure persons who hold limited and small-scale possessions, such as dachas and automobiles, or who recently may have acquired some other comfort rare in the USSR (like a comfortable room or a private bath) that their blessings will not be stripped from them and that Communism poses no immediate threat to their private possessions.

The timing of the article is interesting. At a time when the "pie in the sky" proposals of the Party Program are being "discussed," the regime apparently feels it necessary to reassure the "propertied class" in the Soviet Union that Communism will not be a bad thing for them. (Despatch 189, 9/1/61)

12. Another Execution Under a Law Passed After Commission of a Crime. A. V. Konyukhov, one of the twelve defendants in a case involving thefts of state cloth totalling nearly two million (new) rubles in value, has unsuccessfully attempted to have his death sentence repealed (Sovetskaya Rossiya, August 30). He will be executed under the terms of a law passed May 5, 1961, although the last criminal act committed by him occurred in February, 1961 (according to published accounts of his trial). The unfortunate Konyukhov thus joins the growing ranks of criminals executed in the USSR for crimes which, at the time of their commission, were not punishable by death (Despatch No. 185, September 1, 1961).

(END OFFICIAL USE ONLY)

MILITARY - ARMY (UNCLASSIFIED)

13. Temporary Suspension of Annual Transfers of Active Duty Personnel into Reserve.

Red Star, 30 July, published a decision of the party and government authorizing the Minister of Defense to temporarily suspend transfers into the reserve of active duty personnel who complete their obligatory term of service in 1961. Accordingly, the Minister of Defense now has the authority to retain on active duty, until "the conclusion of a peace treaty with Germany" the numbers of personnel "he deems necessary to insure the combat readiness of the Soviet armed forces." From the sketchy details of the decision published, it is not possible to estimate the actual numbers of servicemen involved. (END UNCLASSIFIED)

For the Charge d'Affaires a.i.

R. T. Davies
First Secretary of Embassy

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